

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper*



THE DEAD MAN'S PORTMANTEAU.

WITHOUT INTENDING IT;

OR, JOHN TINCROFT, BACHELOR AND BENEDICT.

CHAPTER LXI.—TRAITS OF CHARACTER.

It was no false alarm. Walter Wilson was dying. Day and night, almost without any intervals of rest, the penitent Elizabeth watched by the bedside of her brother. Mrs. Matthew did not make many objections to this. Of course she had been hastily summoned to High Beech, when it was found that Walter

could not be conveyed home, and she had obeyed the call. She was concerned, too, when told that her son could not possibly rally beyond the few hours, or days at most, predicted by his medical attendant. She was not without natural affection, though this divine gift had been dulled and dimmed by many sordid cares, as we have seen. Still, when her first exclamations of grief had been uttered, she withdrew again into her ordinary self. She wasn't used to nursing, she said; and she didn't like to see anybody

die. She didn't think she could stand it. Besides, she was getting old and feeble, and must have her proper night's rest, or where would the house-work go to?

As to getting a regular nurse for Walter, she went on, she didn't know what to say, she was sure Regular nurses cost a deal of money, and they wanted a deal to eat and drink too, and that of the best. And where was that to come from? All she knew was that she hadn't seen the colour of Walter's money since he had come down upon them; and it was her opinion, as well as Matthew's, that he had come home from Australia pretty near as poor as a church mouse; and at their years (hers and Matthew's) it wasn't to be expected that they could maintain a grown-up son, and pay for his being nursed as well; to say nothing about burying him when he was dead, supposing he should die, as the doctor said. So, if Elizabeth liked to tend him as he lay there, perhaps it was the best thing to do; and she (Mrs. Matthew) must get through the house-work as best she could without her; and that was hard lines enough. All this, and much more, the old lady enunciated in a sorrowful tone of injured innocence, or something like it.

Matthew Wilson was even less moved by the report of his eldest son's condition. But there is no need to dwell upon this painful side of human nature. It is enough to say again, that where grasping covetousness and close-fisted penuriousness get possession of a human soul, all natural affections become, in time, so blunted as to leave the unhappy entertainer like one "past feeling, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots."*

If the parents of the dying man were thus indifferent to the claims of natural affection, it is no great wonder that Mrs. George Wilson fretted exceedingly at the trouble to which she had unexpectedly been put by the perverseness of her husband's brother, in having brought himself to death's door in the place and manner described. Why should she be having the worry of a dying man in her house? she wanted to know. One way and another she had plenty of plague on her hands, without that additional grievance. She said this, in other words, to Elizabeth, who made no reply, but with strong restraint turned to her brother's side to receive comfort from his dying words.

For Walter had regained consciousness, as we have seen; and, in the intervals of such distressing paroxysms of weakness and painful labouring for breath as were almost equally distressing to witness and to bear, he was able to point his sister to the only true hope and resting-place of the weary and heavy-laden.

During the two or three or more days which intervened between the departure of John Tincroft and his return, the only alleviation, from the outer world, of Elizabeth's trouble, and almost the only help she obtained in her anxious watching, was in the sympathy of Tom Grigson. It was not much that this active man of business knew of, and it was not much, if the truth be known, that he cared for, Walter Wilson; but he cared a good deal for his friend John Tincroft, and he manifested his love for John by caring for John's friends. And if I were disposed to write a sermon on the diffusiveness of charity, I might find an illustration here—showing how the influence extends from heart to heart, till it embraces

a whole circle of rightly-constituted minds in one bond of brotherhood. But I am not a preacher, and shall only advert to the results of this sympathetic, mysterious linking together of one human being with another. It came to pass, then, that Tom Grigson found himself, day after day, attracted to High Beech, and to the bedside of Walter Wilson, bringing with him such creature comforts as the ample resources of the Manor House could furnish, both for the necessities of the patient and the strengthening sustenance of the nurse.

The third day from the departure of John Tincroft brought down the London lawyer to the bedside of his client, and to the consultation that followed were admitted the Squire from the Manor House and his brother. What passed in that solemn conclave was a profound secret to all around, but it terminated in Mr. Fawley (the lawyer, and an old friend of ours in a former history*) being invited to stay at the Manor House, instead of trusting to the uncertain hospitalities of the White Hart, which invitation was frankly accepted.

CHAPTER LXII.—"BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS."

THE news that a gentleman from London had been to see Walter Wilson, and that he was staying at the Manor House, was duly conveyed to Low Beech Farm; but the intelligence excited only the suspicion of old Matthew, who was partially acquainted with the worst side of human nature, and knew what was what, as he said.

"Somebody that Wat owes money to, I'll be bound," said he; "and he'll be coming to me to get it out of me if he can." Under this uneasy apprehension and distrust, Matthew Wilson kept away from High Beech, where his son lay a-dying.

Meanwhile, the unselfish John Tincroft and his charge were travelling as swiftly as the various modes of conveyance they adopted admitted; and on the evening of the fourth day from John's departure on his sorrowful errand, they drove up to High Beech Farm. It was some relief to learn from Mrs. George, on arriving there, that Walter still lived, and, though slowly sinking, was sensible and able to converse at intervals with those around him. After brief preparation, the agitated and heart-stricken daughter was admitted to her father's chamber, and the door was shut upon the two. We shall not intrude, nor attempt to describe the interview that followed. There are scenes and circumstances in the history of our lives almost too sacred and solemn to be introduced, with whatever effect, into a story such as this; and the almost final parting of a dying father from, and his last words to, a loving child must be reckoned among these scenes.

We descend, then, to the parlour below—so well known to John Tincroft in the earlier days of our history, and which has been, not over graciously, yielded by Mrs. George Wilson to her husband's kinsfolk in these days of trouble. Here were seated John and Sarah, not yet disencumbered of their travelling attire, and not having dismissed their hired chaise, which was still outside awaiting further orders. I have little doubt that, as they sat there, some odd and (notwithstanding the present grave and sorrowful occasion) rather comically bewildering remembrances stole in upon them both, causing them to

* The narrator writes cautiously and guardedly here, and the picture he has sketched is but a faint copy of more than one original.

* See "George Burley's Experiences of Life."

look askance, first of all, at the old-fashioned worm-eaten chairs on which they rested, and then shyly and slyly at each other, whereupon Sarah blushed a little, and John, not to confuse his dear wife, made believe not to notice it, but turned away his eyes and looked out of window instead. And then they were recalled to a sense of the trouble that had brought them to High Beech, by hearing the voice of Elizabeth as she descended the stairs.

Sarah and Elizabeth had never seen each other since the day of Sarah's marriage, more than twenty years before; and then their parting was of the coolest and most indifferent sort. And Mrs. Tincroft, on her way to her old home, from the moment of getting into the Trotbury coach, had been unceasingly pondering in her dear little mind how ever she should accomplish a meeting with her cousin. She had no enmity against Elizabeth. Why should she have? To be sure, she had received unkindness at her cousin's hands; but that was long ago, and, besides, it had all turned out for the best. What would be the good, then, of bearing in mind those old passages of arms? To tell the truth, too, Sarah, weak-minded as no doubt she was, was intrinsically good-natured and loving: and it would have been strange if her twenty years and more of companionship with gall-less John Tincroft had not had a beneficial effect upon her. But, for all that, she wasn't quite sure whether a certain show of dignity in remembrance of past injustice and injury wouldn't be the proper thing to put on in the anticipated meeting. Of course, after this, she would show herself very forgiving and very affectionate towards her former persecutor—and so on, and so on.

I have just come across a passage in my desultory reading, which may give me a lift in this part of my story. "The payments and debts and returns of affection," says the writer, "are at all times hard to reckon. Some people pay a whole treasury of love in return for a stone; others deal out their affections at interest; others, again, take everything, to the uttermost farthing, and cast it into the ditch, and go their way and leave their benefactor penniless and a beggar."

Well, these payments and debts and returns are, no doubt, hard to reckon. When they had been girls together, Elizabeth and Sarah had loved one another as cousins. Then had come the fatal blight, brought on by Mark Wilson's vice of intemperance and the kindred one of recklessness, and their whole treasury of love had been poisoned by unkindness on one side and angry resentment on the other. And now, how were they to meet?

John Tincroft had his doubts and anxious thoughts about this, I think; for he sat uneasily watching and waiting for the opening of the door, glancing every now and then at his little wife's perturbed and flushed countenance. And then, presently, the door handle was moved, the latch was gently lifted, and the door was slowly opened. John started from his seat, sprang hastily forward; and before the cousins had time to make up their minds what to say to one another at first starting, he had, with the gallantry of a true gentleman, as he was and ever had been, despite his awkward shyness, led the homely, hard-working, and penitent Elizabeth across the room to where his wife was now standing, like a timid, half-frightened fawn, and brought into contact the hands which had so long been strangers to each other's grasp. And then came a little startled cry;

and Sarah threw her disengaged arm round Elizabeth's neck, and in another moment the cousins were in close embrace, as though they had never been separated in affection.

"How could I ever behave to you as I did?" sobbed Elizabeth.

And after this, and when they had settled down, John left the cousins by themselves, under the pretence of looking after the chaise and its driver, for he could see that he had done all that was needed.

"He is so good—so good to me, and to everybody," cried Sarah, as the door was shut upon Elizabeth and herself: and then the payments and debts and returns of affection, which are so hard to reckon, welled up from both their softened hearts; and there was no more said, on either side, about the past unhappy alienation.

An hour later, and when dear Helen's interview with her father was over, and John and Sarah had stood for a little while by Walter's bedside, it was agreed that Helen—who would not leave her father, she said—should remain under the protection of Aunt Elizabeth, while John and Sarah went to the Manor House, where, as a matter of course, they were expected. And the power of kindness so wrought even upon the hard and not very impressible nature of Mrs. George Wilson, that she felt herself softening under it to the heart-stricken Helen, and agreed that, as long as was needed, she should share with Elizabeth the little bedchamber which for the last few days she had nominally occupied while nursing her brother.

It was not long needed. On the day week from Walter's fainting fit in the holly arbour, he gently sank into that slumber from which there is no awakening. One hand, damp with the dews of death, was laid on the head of his kneeling, weeping daughter, and the other feebly clasped those of his first love and her husband.

And then, as twilight deepened, a solemn silence fell upon all assembled there. Walter was dead.

Later that evening, the last offices to the poor mortal and corruptible body having been performed, came the village carpenter; and all that night, till early morning, in the stillness of the village, was heard from the dimly-lighted-up carpenter's shop, the sharp sound of saw and hammer and nails on stout elm boards, which told of another claimant for a resting-place in God's acre.

On the following evening, the laden coffin was quietly, and without much observation, conveyed from High Beech to the old farmhouse in the valley, and there, in the chamber where he had first drawn breath, was deposited, until the day to be appointed for the funeral, all that was left of the firstborn of old Matthew Wilson.

Meanwhile, Helen, submitting herself to the loving care and sympathy of her friend and protectress, Mrs. Tincroft, had been received at the Manor House with genuine kindness and all delicate attentions by Richard Grigson and his motherly housekeeper.

CHAPTER LXIII.—TELLS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, OF A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION.

THE hospitable Manor House would have held almost any number of guests upon occasion, so, although it entertained at this time Tom Grigson and his son and namesake, John Tincroft and his Sarah, Helen Wilson, and Mr. Fawley the London lawyer, there was room enough and to spare.

There was sufficient reason, Mr. Fawley thought, to induce him to remain a few days, especially in such good quarters, waiting the event of his client's decease. He had been fully forewarned of the doctor's firmly expressed conviction that Walter could not last long, and his own observations confirmed this prediction. Accordingly he was prepared with the will he had drawn up in London those months previously, and with the codicil, which was but a day or two old, and which had been duly witnessed by the Grigsons. Meanwhile he made the best of his time in rambling through the woods and groves in the surrounding neighbourhood, as well as in taking mental notes of the society into which he was thus fortuitously thrown.

While Mr. Fawley was thus engaged, Tom Grigson and his son divided their time pretty equally between the Manor House and the Mumbles, having at their disposal for these almost daily excursions Richard's fast-trotting Peg and dog-cart. Once or twice young Tom remained at his grandfather's house for the night, but he invariably found his way back on the following day—the charms and attractions of his youthful future bride not being sufficiently powerful, as it seemed, to keep the complaisant, immature, and premature lover from the greater freedom from polite restraints to be found at his uncle's.

As to John Tincroft, in the interval between the death and funeral of Helen's father, he had not much inclination for social intercourse. His Sarah and Helen necessarily secluded themselves in the recesses of their ladies' chamber, being understood to be engaged, in conjunction with certain dress-makers and milliners from the next town, in the preparation of mourning attire; or otherwise, the one in giving, and the other in receiving, such solace as under the circumstances was most natural. John, therefore, was much left to himself, excepting when in the company of his host or his old friend Tom. And strange to say (or perhaps *not* strange to say) John rather shunned than courted at this time any confidential intercourse with that old friend.

No, it was not strange. John had been both puzzled and shocked at what he considered the inconceivable blindness of his friend in running the risk of sacrificing the happiness of one whom he had confessed to tenderly loving, for the sake of what might be called a convenient family arrangement. Dear hermit-like John! If he had not lived so long—all his life indeed—shut up in his own shell, so to speak, he might have known how often these convenient family arrangements are entered into in certain classes of society; how many a pair of cousins, or other relatives, are constantly being matched together, without any considerations of fitness or unfitness, likes or dislikes, qualifications or disqualifications; and all for the sake of keeping together a certain number of money bags, or a capital trade connection; or of perpetuating in the family a desirable estate, or a title, or even (as we have known it and witnessed it) the tenancy of a farm!

But John did not know this; and no wonder, therefore, that his eyes sometimes rested, without his knowing it, with mute compassion and sorrowful interest on the young Tom, who, to tell the truth, seemed to care very little about the matter one way or other, so long as he was not expected to remain too long at a time in the company of his cousin Blanche. "I shall have plenty of that when we are

buckled together, father," he said, one day (in John's hearing), when he was remonstrated and reasoned with for running away from his "little wife."

Dear old John! Do you wonder, reader, that with all his experience on the one hand, and his inexperience on the other, he drew doleful pictures of the after life of that bright boy and the cousin whom he was doomed to marry?

"I can't do any good by saying anything about it to Tom," thought he to himself; "and if I could, I haven't the right to interfere, but I pity the poor boy with all my heart." No wonder, then, that under the mood of the time, and while the shadow of death was yet upon him, John felt more embarrassment than he had ever expected to feel when thrown into his friend Tom Grigson's company.

Here for the present we must leave, not only this subject, but also the Manor House, and enter the humbler precincts of Low Beech Farm.

A habitation into which death has entered, or which, as at Low Beech, is for the time brought into intimate connection and fellowship with the grave, seems to be cut off from the rest of the world, and to gather around it an atmosphere of oppression and gloom. The darkened windows, the noiseless footsteps and subdued tones of voice which every inhabitant adopts, as though fearful of awakening the dead, and all other signs and tokens of grief, whether simulated or real, seem to mark that house as set apart from the common and ordinary and vulgar associations of everyday existence.

And yet it is not really so. The business of life must be carried on; and the passions and habits and dispositions of the living will be found to be held very little in check even by the near presence of the dead. At Low Beech, for instance, the sordid carefulness of old Matthew and his wife had not disappeared beneath the dignity of parental sorrow. No doubt they mourned for their son after a certain fashion; that is, they would rather he had been alive and well and well-to-do, and rather also that, seeing he was doomed to die, the blow had not fallen so as to place them at an inconvenience and possible expense. But things having happened as they had gave no reason for neglecting the business of the farm and house. So Mrs. Matthew went about her work as usual, while Elizabeth was preparing and "making up black," as the mother explained to the clergyman who called to condole with the family on their bereavement; and Matthew went looking after his men, and feeding his stock, to all appearance little moved by his proximity at home to his dead Walter.

But he was moved, nevertheless. He couldn't make it out anyhow, he muttered to his wife. He had varied his opinion, as we have seen, on the subject of Walter's pecuniosity or impecuniosity; and now, at the last, he was utterly bewildered. He shifted his views almost every quarter of an hour, at one time thinking his son must have got a nest-egg somewhere or other; and then returning to his firm conviction that if Walter had been well off and prospering in Australia he would never have returned to his home. I do not think that I, the chronicler, am bound to explain, or to attempt to explain, the motives (if there were any) for Walter Wilson's reticence about his money matters, both to his friend Tincroft and to his relatives at Low Beech. I incline to the opinion, however, that there was no distinct reason for his silence; and that, had he lived a short

time longer, a part, at least, of the old people's curiosity would have been satisfied. This, however, is but a conjecture; and it is certain that, respecting his worldly possessions, Walter Wilson "died and made no sign."

And old Matthew was troubled—so troubled that he could not rest; and on one of the days previous to the funeral, while he was pondering over it, and balancing probabilities, it came into his mind that Walter's portmanteau was in the death-chamber, together with the coffin; and also that a pocket-book which he had seen in his son's hands was probably in the coat which he had worn on the day of his seizure, and which had been brought to Low Beech on the removal of the corpse.

Strange that Matthew had never thought of this until now! What more likely than that in those receptacles lay hidden some clue to the mystery which was troubling him—or at least some scrap of information which would help to set his mind at rest. And who had a better right than he to look into his son's personal belongings now that he (Walter) was beyond any further need of them? To be sure, there was the dead man's daughter, to whom they properly belonged, perhaps. But she was only a girl, and could know nothing about the rights of proprietorship; and besides, wasn't he (Matthew) the poor child's natural guardian—always supposing there should be anything to keep guard over? And then came his old suspicion of John Tincroft having kept back some knowledge about Walter's affairs of which he was custodian. Else why was he so willing to take charge of Helen, as he had promised to do?

Matthew was out on his farm when these thoughts came into his head; but he soon retraced his steps homewards; and stealing in at the back entrance to the farm, unobserved as he believed, he crept up the stairs while his wife and daughter and maid-servant were engaged below, and softly entered the room which contained the coffin of his dead son. As noiselessly as he could he closed the door, and would have locked himself in, probably, but that the key had long been lost.

The portmanteau was on the floor, locked; and the garments of the dead hung on pegs near the bed's head. To search the pockets for the key of the portmanteau, and also for the pocket-book, was, no doubt, the old farmer's first impulse. These were found; and then, kneeling down on the floor for greater convenience in the meanness he contemplated, he applied the key.

There was nothing in the portmanteau to reward his search until, carefully removing, one by one, the changes of raiment which it contained, he came at last to two small parchment-bound and brass-clasped books, with Walter Wilson's name written on the covers. Trembling with excitement, the old man loosed the clasp of one of these books, and turned over one or two leaves.

Marvellous! There were entries there which made old Matthew turn giddy. Entries of investments in the funds, in stock of various kinds, in railway shares (it was in the early days of railroads, be it remembered)—investments to the amount of thousands of pounds, bearing interest (as the keen-eyed old man saw at a glance) that would reach up to six or seven hundred pounds a-year, if not considerably more!

With a hasty movement, Matthew closed this book,

reclasped it, and opened the other. It was a bank-book—some London bank—in which a respectable sum had been placed to the credit side of the account, with only one or two small items on the opposite page, indicating that these sums only had been drawn out since the account was opened.

Almost beside himself with excitement, the avaricious old man carefully replaced these precious volumes, and refilled the portmanteau before he ventured to turn to the pocket-book which lay on the floor within his reach. This was soon accomplished, however, and the book was opened. It had many divisions in it, forming separate cases, and there were folded papers in several of these receptacles. But Matthew, after his former discoveries, cared little for these in comparison with the contents of one of these pockets, which attracted his glistening eyes. "Bank notes! One, two, three. Ten! Twenty! Fifty!" gasped the covetous old man, as he unfolded and held them up to the light. "Who would have thought of this now!"

Who shall tell the force of the temptation that whirled through that sordid brain, and quickened the sluggish pulses of that throbbing heart? the temptation which whispered to his grasping thoughts and desires that his son, being dead, needed money no longer; that no one knew of his having that amount of portable wealth about his person, that his granddaughter was of course well provided for, and that, at all events, he himself was the proper person to take care of this property—till it was claimed, if it ever should be; and if not claimed—well, what then?

His trembling hands had closed upon these notes, and he was about to—no, not to replace them in the pocket-book, when suddenly the chamber door was thrown open, and his daughter stood before him, flushed with fear and anger.

"For shame, father! Oh, father, father! what is it you are doing? Put them back, put them back, put them back!" she cried, in tones of terror; "and thank God for having saved you from this sin."

"Elizabeth, woman! how dare you speak to me like that? What is it you mean? What business have you to be prying into what doesn't concern you?" stammered the miserable old man, in broken sentences, as he sprang to his feet, the bank paper still in his grasp.

"Put them back! put them back!" repeated the daughter, in yet stronger tones of desperation. "Strike me if you will, father," she cried, as she thought she detected a threatening gesture in the clenched hand; "strike me, and kill me, if you will, and let me be laid along with poor Walter—oh, I wish I could be; I wish I could be!—but don't rob the dead and the living as well. Father, dear father," she went on, in more imploring accents, "put them back; oh, father, put them back!"

"How came you here, girl?" demanded the old man, hoarsely.

"God sent me, I think," said she; "oh, father, I heard you come in, and knew that you came up here, and I followed, and have seen it all from that little window,"—and she pointed to a single pane of glass in a corner of the room near the ceiling, which dimly lighted a narrow dark staircase to the attic above—"and God has sent me to keep you from doing a great sin. Oh, father, father, put them back!"

Slowly and silently the old man cast his eyes on to the floor, stooped, picked up the pocket-book, put

the notes in their former position, then passionately threw the book down again, muttering, "I shall remember this, Elizabeth. I shan't forget it, you may make sure of that," and then he shuffled out of the room.

CHAPTER LXIV.—THE LAST OF LOW BEECH.

It was a fine, soft, sunny day on the afternoon of which Walter Wilson was buried. There was but little pomp at that funeral, though there were many to follow him to his grave. There was Helen as chief mourner, and the ceremonious undertaker said that it was the right and proper thing for her, as the only child, to walk first and alone, behind the coffin, all the way from Low Beech Farm to the church—for it was a walking funeral, as was the fashion then in those parts; but Helen pleaded so earnestly and tearfully that Sarah might accompany her and support her, and so put strength into her to bear the last scene in her father's history on earth, that it was yielded. And so Walter's old discarded lover, and his daughter by another and perhaps more highly prized wife than Sarah would ever have been, followed him together and stood side by side at the open grave, and were the last to depart when the solemn ceremony was over.

And if the tears which ran down Sarah's cheek then, sprang, some of them, from old remembrances revived, there was no treason in them against God or man. In that world whither the words just uttered over the dead transported the thoughts of the living, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

Old Matthew and his wife followed their firstborn to the grave, and in their train came Walter's sister and his brothers and their wives. And then John Tincroft and the lawyer came after. And the Griggses were there too. It was "a fine funeral," one of the onlookers said to another. But it was soon over, and then the family, with Tincroft and the lawyer, returned to Low Beech to transact business; for there was Walter's will to be read, as Mr. Fawley had taken care to inform them all. Helen would fain have stayed away, but it was needful she should be there; and, still under Sarah's wing, but supported and comforted now by John Tincroft also, she entered, for almost the first time, the home of her father's childhood and youth.

The will, when it came to be read, was not very prolix. It contained an inventory of investments, and all was left in trust—after the payment of a legacy of a thousand pounds to his dear cousin Sarah Tincroft—to John Tincroft, of Tincroft House, and so forth, for the benefit of the testator's dear and only child, Helen. The property thus bequeathed amounted, at a rough calculation, to something over twenty thousand pounds. The will also constituted John Tincroft sole executor of the testator's estate and effects, and the guardian of his daughter until she should be of age. In case of her decease before she had reached twenty-one, the property was to be distributed among certain charities which were named.

No mention was made in this will of any other family connections than John and Sarah. Evidently it had been prepared at a time when the fire of resentment in Walter's mind against his family had not yet died out.

Matthew Wilson looked furiously across the room at John Tincroft and Sarah. He understood it all now, he thought; and before he had composed himself the lawyer was reading the codicil which had been drawn up and signed and witnessed so lately in the sick-chamber at High Beech.

In this instrument was revoked so much of the original will as related to the disposal of the property in case of Helen's death, and a fresh disposition was made of it. It was to be divided in equal parts between the several members of the testator's family, or their survivors.

Old Matthew smiled ghastly at this. Little hope that he should ever see any of his son's money, he probably thought.

But there was something else more interesting.

After an expression of regret that there had been so long an alienation or distance of feeling between the testator and his family, certain legacies were to be paid to them out of the estate, amounting altogether to a thousand pounds—namely, two hundred pounds each to the brothers, to old Matthew, and to the sister. In addition to this there were some bank notes which would be found in his pocket-book—(old Matthew broke out into a visible perspiration here)—amounting to eighty pounds. This sum the testator willed to be placed without deduction into the hands of his dear sister Elizabeth, in remembrance of their old love which had been afresh stirred up (the document went on to say) by what passed in the last walk they took together.

This was nearly all. The funeral expenses were, of course, to be paid out of the estate, and the necessary legal powers were to be placed in John Tincroft's hands to administer to the will.

There was a short silence when Mr. Fawley had finished reading; and he and his friends from the Manor House were about to depart, when old Matthew arose. Hoarsely he spoke.

He had never known such trickery—never. Here was his son Walter, who had come home from Australia a rich man, making believe to be a poor man. Or if he didn't make believe that, he never said he wasn't, and didn't seem as if he had got a pound to bless himself with. And then, instead of coming to his proper home in England, as he ought to have done, and to his old father and mother, he had been putting up with his old lover and her husband, which was most improper; but of course Mr. Tincroft had made it answer his purpose. And though he had pretended to him that he did not know whether Walter was rich or poor, anybody could see now what a pretence that was. And he was to be executor too, and Helen's guardian, when, by rights, he, the grandfather, ought to have been. A good deal more fit, he was, though he said it, to take care of money (having been used to business all his life) than a college gentleman who had never added up a sum since he went to school, he dared to say. And he said now that it was an unnatural thing, and wicked, to be taking his poor granddaughter from her proper sheltering place; and he wanted to know if Mr. Tincroft meant to come between relations like that. Wasn't Helen Wilson his own flesh and blood?

And then there was the money that was left to Elizabeth over and above her share of that paltry thousand pounds—

"You shall have it all, father, if you will," said Elizabeth, "only if you won't go on talking like this," she added, her cheeks mantling with shame.

"And if your granddaughter prefers making her home at Low Beech, she has only to say so, and her will shall be law to me," said John Tinceroff.

We need not give Helen's reply. And as little need is there to tell how the sombre party soon broke up. Our next chapter will open on other scenes and circumstances.

THE LATE JOSEPH PEASE.

THE Peases of Darlington are descended from a West Riding family which had settled near Wakefield, where an old house still remains, called Pease Hall. They and the Peases, bankers, of Hull, are of a common stock, and the Darlington branch, in particular, traces its origin to an austere father who turned his son from house and home for having adopted the principles of Quakerism.* Faithfully adhering to the tenets of their outcast Quaker ancestor, the descendants of this gentleman took root in Darlington, and prospered as woollen manufacturers. The late Joseph Pease, whose demise, in his seventy-third year, occurred at Darlington on the 8th of February last, is perhaps the most remarkable specimen of this energetic race. Although his name is one not of imperial, but mainly of local renown, we make no apology for inviting the attention of our readers to the following sketch. In South Durham and North Yorkshire, the sphere of his influence and philanthropic labours, Mr. Pease was esteemed and beloved. To the world at large he may stand as a type of our merchant princes, a class of Englishmen—happily not a small one—to whom the country owes much, and who, among other services, have dignified commercial enterprise by the high spirit of probity and honour employed in its conduct.

The son of an enterprising sire, the subject of our notice was born at Darlington in June, 1799. The late Mr. Edward Pease, his father, will be remembered as the friend and early patron of George Stephenson, and as the originator of the Stockton and Darlington Railway—the first passenger railway in England. Joseph Pease was first educated at the boarding-school conducted by Joseph Tatham at Leeds, and afterwards at the seminary of his relative Josiah Forster, at Southgate, near London. Both these gentlemen were valued members of the Society of Friends. Mr. Forster was well known for his educational zeal, and for his labours in connection with the abolition of slavery, and the establishment of the British and Foreign School Society, the Bible Society, and other beneficent institutions. The nephew of Mr. Pease's former preceptor is the Right Honourable William Edward Forster, a member of the present Cabinet, and Minister for Education.

The active and sprightly disposition, and exuberant animal spirits of Joseph Pease called for, we are informed, no common care on the part of his parents, Edward and Rachel Pease. Happily the religious training of home was continued both at Leeds and Southgate, and a right bias given to the ardent character of the youth, which strengthened with years and became fruitful in good results. On his removal from Mr. Forster's care, he entered upon the duties of his father's business. His father was in partnership with his uncle, Joseph Pease,

senior, whose son, John Beaumont Pease, was the active colleague of Clarkson and Wilberforce in the anti-slavery movement, and one of the founders of the Peace Society. Besides a knowledge of counting-house work, to gain a general practical acquaintance with his business, young Joseph Pease was, as the phrase is, "put into the mills." There he acquired the mystery of sorting, combing, and dressing, and became an expert in every department of woollen manufacture.

So early as 1810 the project was conceived of a railway or canal to connect the towns of Stockton and Darlington. The sagacity of Edward Pease, who came to be the chief promoter, decided in favour of a railway in preference to a canal; but it was not until 1819, when his son Joseph was in his twentieth year, that a company was completely organised, and parliamentary powers asked, to carry out the project. The bill was, in the first instance, defeated by a combination of landowners, headed by the Duke of Cleveland. In 1820 the application was renewed. Not until 1823, however, did the Stockton and Darlington Act obtain the sanction of the legislature. On attaining his majority Joseph Pease became a nominal investor in the concern, and enthusiastically co-operated with his father in promoting its interests.

One who knew Mr. Edward Pease in 1818, said "he was a man who could look a hundred miles ahead." Mr. Smiles, the biographer of Stephenson, who visited him in 1854, and found him then a hale old man, reports with what pleasure he looked back upon the triumphs which followed the anxious cares of one period of his life. Pointing from his drawing-room window to the wooded knolls on the other side of the valley, he congratulated himself on the fine old trees planted by his own hand and then grown to umbrageous maturity. "They grew while I slept, and now see what a goodly array they make!" But railways he maintained, were a far more extraordinary growth. "When I started the Stockton and Darlington Railway thirty-five years ago, I was already fifty years old. Nobody could then have dreamt what railways could have grown to within one man's life-time."

The Stockton and Darlington Act contained the first clause in any Act of Parliament empowering the employment of locomotive engines for the working of passenger traffic. This clause was inserted at the earnest request of George Stephenson, who had been employed as the engineer of the projected line. Statues have been erected in honour of Stephenson; and from the small beginnings of these days the capital invested in railways in this country has now reached the immense aggregate of five hundred and thirty million pounds sterling. These facts pertain to the romance of railway enterprise. It is instructive, therefore, to look back to the first interview of the Killingworth engine-wright with Edward Pease in 1821. Stephenson had come to Darlington and got introduced to Mr. Pease, with the view of being employed to carry out the undertaking. His modest and unpretending appearance, his honesty and knowledge, strongly impressed Mr. Pease, who soon saw he was the man for his purpose. Mr. Pease had made his calculations on the employment of horse-power, and was scarcely prepared for the bold assertion of the engine-wright, that the locomotive engine with which he was working the Killingworth coal railway was worth fifty horses. "Come over to Killingworth" said he, "and see what my Blucher

* See Longstaffe's "History of Darlington."

can do; seeing is believing, sir." Pease went to Killingworth, and the sight of Blucher put through its paces entirely satisfied him as to the superiority of the locomotive engine.

While George Stephenson was re-surveying the Stockton and Darlington line he would drop in at Mr. Pease's house when the day's work was over to discuss the progress of the survey, and various matters connected with the railway. In these conversations Joseph Pease had a share; he was necessarily associated with Stephenson in the progress of the works, and it is difficult to say how much he was influenced in his after career by the sound practical sagacity and sterling honesty of the unpretending engineer.

During George Stephenson's visits to Mr. Pease's house, the family were greatly pleased with his conversation, which was always amusing and instructive. Mr. Pease's daughters were usually present. On one occasion finding the young ladies learning the art of embroidery, he volunteered to instruct them. "I know all about it," said he, "and you will wonder how I learnt it. It was while brakesman at Killingworth, and when working the pitman's button-holes by the engine fires at night." It is pleasing to relate in connection with the Stockton and Darlington Railway that when Mr. Stephenson became a prosperous and celebrated man, he did not forget the friend who had taken him by the hand and helped him on in his early days. He always remembered Mr. Pease with gratitude and affection. That gentleman, who died in 1858 at the age of ninety-two, was in his lifetime proud to exhibit a handsome gold watch received as a gift from his distinguished *protégé*, bearing these words:—"Esteem and gratitude. From George Stephenson to Edward Pease."

In his nineteenth year Joseph Pease had composed a first draft of the prospectus of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company, a copy of which is yet extant. On that prospectus, slightly amended, the company was ultimately organised and the capital raised. He was subsequently appointed to the onerous position of treasurer, which was necessary, as no banker had then sufficient faith in the enterprise. Mr. Pease is described as having been a young man of handsome personal appearance and a favourite in society; his manners marked by a graceful admixture of modesty and courage. On the 20th March, 1826, he was married, after the manner of the Society of Friends, to Miss Emma Gurney, daughter of the eminent banker of that name at Norwich. The marriage was a happy one; and happy in its effect on the early cultivation of his love for domestic life, while it brought him into intimate connection with families of large capitalists who in succeeding years co-operated with him in the enterprises which led to the development of Cleveland.

The first idea of the Stockton and Darlington Railway was simply for the carriage of merchandise between the towns. A passenger traffic, suggested by Stephenson, was next provided for. The conveyance of coals on the line developed into coal exportation. The first cargo of coals was shipped from Stockport on the 26th of January, 1826; and in a few years the shipments, continental, metropolitan, and coastwise, had so vastly increased that the accommodation furnished by Stockport became insufficient for the growing trade. A new seaport for the export of coal became a dominating idea in the mind of Joseph Pease. Under the advice of his father, a company of which he was the founder and principal

partner became the purchasers of 500 acres of land lower down the River Tees. A solitary farmhouse and its outbuildings occupied an isolated position on this land, while pasture fields and mud-banks formed the chief feature of the scene. This was the Middlesborough estate, now occupied by the flourishing town of Middlesborough. The first house was built in 1830; and the census of 1871 gives the population as verging upon 47,000. Intended merely at first as a port for the shipment of coals, Middlesborough is now chiefly known as a rapidly progressing centre for the iron manufacture. Ironstone is abundantly raised in the surrounding country; shipbuilding is carried on; and there are also in the town, chemical, brass, engine, and bottle works, with potteries, blast furnaces, and rope-walks. Mr. Pease's scheme to extend the railway thither met, strange to say, with the fierce opposition of the coal-owners. On a second application to Parliament, in 1828, the Bill was, however, passed. An extensive coal-owner who engaged in this opposition lived to say that the coal-owners of South Durham owed an everlasting debt of gratitude to Mr. Joseph Pease, beyond any other man, for having, by his energetic perseverance, conquered their prejudices. While engaged in these various undertakings, Mr. Pease became himself a coal-owner. To enumerate all the colliery enterprises with which he from time to time became connected is not necessary; suffice it to say that each stage of progress was marked by the clear judgment and decisive action characteristic of the man. When, in January, 1870, Mr. Pease formally retired from business, the collieries belonging to the firm, composed then of his brother Henry and his five sons, were among the largest in England. In connection with these collieries a very large establishment of coke-ovens has long been in operation, producing upwards of a million of tons of coke per annum. There are also large works for the manufacture of bricks, pipes, and articles of a like kind, besides other subsidiary industries. The coal works, while giving employment to many thousand people, have greatly stimulated the development of the iron manufacture, now a great and growing industry of the districts of Cleveland, South Durham, and Furness.

After the passing of the Reform Act, in 1832, Mr. Pease was invited to offer himself as a candidate for South Durham. To the deputation of electors which waited on him, he would give no reply until he had consulted his parents. His mother, desirous above everything that her son should "live unspotted from the world," was adverse. His father, satisfied that the invitation was the spontaneous will of the electors, said, "I don't see how thou art to decline. Thy duty lies in accepting it." The invitation was accepted, and an address issued. In his address, referring to what was then too common, the purchase of a seat in the House of Commons, he said, "I will never buy what I will never sell. I will never seek to obtain by unworthy means what I have pledged myself to use worthily. If my sentiments be your sentiments, if I am the man of your choice, it is well; with the blessing of Heaven, I will do my duty as a man and a Christian."

Mr. Pease was returned at the head of the poll, and appeared in the House of Commons on the 8th February, 1833. He, however, as a Quaker, declined to take the oath required of members, and was requested by the Speaker to withdraw from the House. A committee was appointed

to search for precedents bearing on the point. It appeared that a Mr. Archdall, a Quaker, elected to a seat in the House in the reign of William III, was refused admittance; but in Mr. Pease's case, on the report of the committee, a

Pease had afterwards the satisfaction of taking a leading part in effecting the legislative suppression of this barbarous sport. He opposed paying to the West Indian planters the compensation money voted until the great measure of abolition of slavery was



Pease.

motion was unanimously agreed to that he should take his seat for South Durham. Henceforth he was the Quaker member—the first representative of an English constituency belonging to the Society of Friends, on whose behalf a solemn affirmation had been received in place of the usual oath. In the House, Mr. Pease, as a practical man, gave his attention to practical matters of legislation, and distinguished himself for his uncompromising and independent conduct as a politician. He proposed the insertion of a clause in the Metropolitan Police Bill, prohibiting the popular pastime of bear and bull baiting, which was lost at the time by a majority of four in a House of eighty-eight members; but Mr.

carried into effect. The abolition of slavery, as might be expected from Mr. Pease's character and principles, engaged his deepest sympathies. His speech in seconding Sir George Strickland's motion for the immediate termination of "Apprenticeships," made a deep impression on the House.

The following sketch of Mr. Pease appeared in Mr. Grant's "Random Recollections":—

"Mr. Pease, the Quaker member for Durham, is one of the most useful, though not one of the most shining, members in the House. In his attendance on his legislative duties, he is the most punctual and close of any man I ever saw. He even beats Mr. Hume himself. From the beginning of the business

till the adjournment, no matter how late the hour, there he is, not indeed in any particular seat, but in some part or other of the House, all attention to what is going on. It is clear he acts from principle. As to a party object, he knows not what it is. A more conscientious or upright man never sat in the House. His amazingly close attention to his duties in Parliament has told visibly on his constitution. He is much thinner, and much more sallow in his complexion, than when he entered the House.

"Mr. Pease speaks pretty often, but it is chiefly in committees, or on questions that do not call up the leading members. His mode of address is, of course, different from that of other members. He never uses the word 'Sir,' in addressing the Speaker, which all other members do at almost every fourth or fifth sentence; nor does he call any member, according to the invariable practice of all other members when addressing the House, 'the honourable member,' but simply says, 'the member' for such a place. In short, agreeably to the principles of the society to which he belongs, he applies no honorary titles to any one.

"He speaks with great rapidity, and is never at a loss for words or ideas. His style is correct, but plain. In his manner there is no action whatever. He stands stock still. His voice is weak, which, with his great rapidity of utterance, often renders him inaudible.

"His stature is of the middle size. His face is of an angular form, and is expressive of the mildness and intelligence for which he is distinguished. His judgment is remarkably sound, and he always takes the common-sense view of a subject. He is not only a man of great intelligence, but is always correct in the statements he brings to bear on any question. Taken all in all, he is, as I observed in the outset, one of the most useful members in the House. If he is a fair specimen of the society to which he belongs, the country would have no reason for regret, were the entire six hundred and fifty-eight members selected from the Society of Friends."

In 1835, and again in 1837, Mr. Pease was returned for South Durham. As to his personal appearance there is happily a most authoritative memento. The magnificent painting of the Members of the First Reform Parliament, executed by Sir George Hayter, and containing upwards of five hundred striking portraits from life, which long adorned the library of the House of Commons, is now to be seen in the vestibule of the Historical Portrait Gallery at South Kensington. On the left of the Speaker, and about midway from the gangway—two benches behind Daniel O'Connell, who, in the act of rising, is cast into prominence—may be seen the figure of "the first Quaker member of Parliament." The study taken in oil for this portrait remains in possession of Mr. Pease's family.

Mr. Pease retired from Parliament at the election of 1841, having declined, on the score of weakened health, again to become a candidate. He, however, soon saw other members of the Society of Friends returned to the House of Commons—John Bright for the city of Durham, and first his own brother and afterward his eldest son as his successors for South Durham. In the farewell address of Mr. Pease to the electors of South Durham appears the following passage:—"I recur with much emotion to the period when, unaided by any man and unfettered by pre-

judice, you chose me as one of your representatives in the first reformed parliament. For a while the work of reform and good government was progressive. Many salutary changes were accomplished. The national expenditure was curtailed. Sinicures were abolished. Vexatious taxes were repealed. West Indian slavery was annihilated. The East Indies were thrown open to British enterprise. Education, learning, and the social condition of the people received the fostering care of government. Many threatening clouds, portending war and misery, were dispersed by a pacific policy. And the great cause of civil and religious liberty made visible and heart-cheering advances."

In the cause of popular education, Mr. Pease was an ardent and devoted labourer. Perhaps the noblest monument of his life may be found in the schools founded by him, and in the thousands who owe to those schools such education and culture as they have acquired in early life. In his boyhood Mr. Pease had felt much interested in the zeal and success with which a young Quaker, named Joseph Lancaster, had taken in hand a work in which at that time neither State nor Church appeared willing to engage—the education of the poor. The British and Foreign School Society—the fruit of Lancaster's labours—had no more earnest, and we may add no more munificent supporter than Joseph Pease. With other friends of education he cordially united in the erection of the first public school in Middlesborough, in connection with the British and Foreign School Society. Forty years later, in 1870, he presented as a free gift to the town the Southend Schools, which afford accommodation for over 600 scholars, with separate playgrounds for each of the schools. In the same year he presented £3,000 to the North of England Agricultural School. At that time there were in the service of the Messrs. Pease—and for the most part in schools established at Mr. Joseph Pease's cost—twenty-nine salaried teachers, assisted by seven sewing mistresses and about sixty pupil teachers. Mr. J. M. Browne, in his "Educational Report for 1871," says:—

"As the railway traveller passes along the Stockton and Darlington line, he will find from end to end monuments in the shape of first-class school buildings, which bear testimony to the zeal of this friend of education, through whose princely generosity they have been reared and upheld, and in which there cannot be less than 4,000 scholars under tuition. Mr. Pease has done as much in this way to improve the character and condition of the myriads connected with these two counties as any one man could be expected to do. Had all employers of labour in this growingly important part of the world done as he has done in this matter, there would not have been a tithe of the ignorance, drunkenness, and crime which now prevail in our midst. The world owes much to the pioneers of civilisation and progress—men who, out of their abundance, have done much to benefit the condition of their less fortunate neighbours and dependents; and among these Mr. Joseph Pease must ever occupy a proud pre-eminence."

At the present time, we may add, seven missionaries labour for the good of the men employed by the Messrs. Pease in the coal and ironstone mining districts of Peases West and Cleveland. They are all teetotalers, and use their best endeavours to bring

those with whom they come in contact over to the side of temperance. The mission is entirely of an unsectarian character. Of the missionaries, only one is a member of the Society of Friends. Mr. Pease has acted either as the founder or a supporter of all educational and useful public institutions of his native town of Darlington. He was one of the first members of the Darlington Local Board of Health, afterwards superseded by the present municipal corporation. The important services rendered by himself and his family to the town were gracefully recognised by the election of his brother Henry as first mayor of the borough under the new charter. At the first Great Exhibition of 1851, the name and fame of Darlington were made known for the first time to millions in connection with the name of Pease. "The materials of the flags flying from the roof of the Crystal Palace," says a chronicler, "were made by Messrs. Pease and Co.; the very iron of which the fairy-like structure was composed was smelted by Pease's coke; geological sections from Pease's iron and coal mines gave instruction to foreign visitors as to the northern field of enterprise; and Pease's fire-bricks and Pease's Cobourgs gained prizes at the Exhibition."

For several years the late Mr. Joseph Pease was president of the Peace Society, having been elected on the death of Mr. Joseph Sturge in 1859. His brother Henry was the Mr. Pease who had an interview, accompanied by Mr. Sturge, with the Emperor of Russia before the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854. The pecuniary support given by Mr. Joseph Pease to the operations of the Peace Society has (like that of his family) been exceedingly liberal. He was attached, we need scarcely say, throughout life to the distinctive principles of the Friends. He filled the office of elder, and more recently discharged the duties of one of the ministers of his communion. He regularly attended the yearly meetings; and in the smaller and more local church meetings he took a prominent part with marked earnestness for the spiritual prosperity of his fellow-members.

In later years the reading of religious biography, the critical study of Holy Writ, with the aid of Alford's "Greek Testament," Alford's "New Testament for English Readers," Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," and other biblical works, shared much of Mr. Pease's attention. He kept up an extensive correspondence, but much of it was in the direct service of charity. Some works were his particular favourites, such as Clarkson's "Portraiture of Quakerism," and Dymond's "Essays on Christian Morality." These works he printed at his own expense, and either gave copies away, or sold them at a reduced rate, to encourage their extensive dissemination.

For a number of years Mr. Pease suffered from impaired vision; and in 1865 he was afflicted with total blindness. One of his last works of philanthropy, among many which deserve mention, and to which we refer in conclusion, was the translation at his cost of Dymond's "Principles of Morality" into Spanish, and the sending to Spain handsomely-bound copies for distribution. This was done under the conviction that the book was well adapted to the wants of Spain, and that its philosophical consistency would recommend it to the Spanish intellect. Volumes were presented to the King, to each of the members of Cortes, to the principals of the universities, and to many of the public libraries and leading men of

Spain. Mr. Pease's gift was highly appreciated by King Amadeo, by the Senate of Spain, and the Congress of Deputies, all of whom forwarded to the donor their official acknowledgments. On the 2nd January last, little more than a month before his death, a telegram reached Darlington that the Spanish Government had conferred on the aged philanthropist the Order of the Grand Cross of Carlos Third, as a further recognition of his interest in the welfare of Spain, and of his act of thoughtful generosity.*

NOT IN THE CAB.

MANY interesting cases of circumstantial evidence recently appeared in the "Leisure Hour." It is well thus to have the danger of hasty judgment set before us from time to time; and the following true story, although of a far less important occurrence, teaches the same lesson.

The W—— family have resided in the same locality in London for more than forty years. Most of the members have been born and brought up there, and they are personally well known to most of the residents in the district.

Early one day, about three years ago, Miss W—— left home for a few hours, on business. She is tall, stout, and has dark hair. On the occasion in question she wore a black silk dress, a black velvet mantle, and a black tulle bonnet with a crimson rose in it; and she was in the habit of carrying a small hand-bag of striped string. One of her sisters subsequently joined her by appointment. It had been agreed that they should call together upon a friend; but Miss W—— had found it necessary to change her plan, as she had to select some books. Her sister, therefore, returned home, and she proceeded to a bookseller's.

An hour or two afterwards, another sister went out for a walk. She had not gone many yards from her own door, when she was startled by a cab, without a driver, coming down the road at great speed, the horse running away; and she recognised both as belonging to a man whom the family had for years been in the habit of employing. The horse soon stopped himself by dashing against a lamp-post, which wrenched off two of the wheels, and broke the glass, the doors, and the shafts.

A policeman was on the spot in an instant. Whatever "Punch" may assert about a policeman never being "the first person present" at a disturbance, experience proves that whenever an accident takes place one invariably appears from somewhere or other. The surprise of Miss F. W—— soon became alarm, when the man took out of the shattered cab a hand-bag of striped string and a parcel, evidently of books! She claimed them at once, as belonging to her sister; but he civilly told her that he must have proof of the ownership before giving them up.

By this time a crowd had collected, chiefly of those who had run after the cab, and the policeman was soon told that the lady who had the bag and the parcel was in a shop in the B—— Road when the horse had started off. In reply to further inquiries,

* In the preparation of the foregoing notice, we have been mainly indebted to a "Memoir of Joseph Pease," reprinted from the columns of the "Northern Echo" newspaper.

Miss F. W— was informed that the lady “*was tall and stout, with dark hair, dressed in black, with a crimson rose in her bonnet.*” She and the policeman accordingly proceeded to the B— Road to meet her sister, and to assure her of the safety of her bag and parcel. They came upon groups of people who were discussing the accident, and quickly heard a more fearful, and, as it proved, a more truthful account. The lady was in the cab when the horse went off; she had jumped out, and had injured herself so much that she had been taken to the hospital. A gentleman who was among the bystanders, and had assisted to lead off the poor lady, kindly endeavoured to soothe the evident agitation of Miss F. W— by the hope that her sister, now fully recognised as such, was more stunned than really hurt; and, calling a cab, placed her in it, telling the man to which hospital to drive.

Meanwhile the cook of the family, hearing the commotion in the road, emerged from her kitchen to learn particulars. The crowd did not maintain towards her the reticence which they had observed with Miss F. W—; she was told at once that Miss W— had jumped out of the cab, was pretty nearly killed, and had been carried to the hospital. She had not the heart to communicate the tidings to the other sisters, who were watching anxiously for further news, so she retreated into the depths of the basement to weep. The family saw her return, with a white and scared face, and dared not ask what she had heard.

When Miss F. W— reached the hospital, the house-surgeon gave a very unfavourable view of the case. The lady was severely hurt, and it had been found necessary to make up a bed on the ground-floor, that she might not have to be carried up-stairs. He hesitated to admit even a sister, but at length yielded to her pleading. They approached the bed, and the medical man said quietly to the patient, “Here is your sister come to see you.” The lady looked round, and replied, “That is not my sister!” Distressed beyond measure at this reply, which confirmed the fear expressed that the shock had caused her mind to wander, Miss F. W— burst into tears, exclaiming, “Oh, R—!” “My name is not R—, it is A—,” quickly returned the patient, and then the visitor saw that she really was not her sister! The figure, hair, and dress were quite those of Miss W—; and a strip of plaster across the face covered it sufficiently to conceal any particular difference of feature. It now only remained for cordial sympathy for the patient’s suffering to be expressed, with regret for the intrusion upon her.

And where was Miss W— all this time? She had gone to the bookseller’s, ordered the books, and returned leisurely home. Her sister had not come back from the hospital (of her visit there the rest of the family were still ignorant), but she was greeted with a tumult of joy that bewildered her. Sisters ran down from the drawing-room, servants ran up from the kitchen. “What an escape you *have* had!” said one; “We have been so frightened!” said another; until at last the story came out. Miss W— heard of the accident to the cab, and the others heard that she had not been in it at all, nor had she that day taken out her striped string bag. The books, too, were to follow her; she had not brought them away with her.

The return of the sister from the hospital expe-

dition added a further marvel, for the likeness must have been strong indeed to have misled her even for a moment.

It was not, therefore, a matter of surprise to find what a tragic story went round the neighbourhood. Everyone *knew* it was Miss W— who had met with the accident, and sympathised with her relatives accordingly. In the evening of the same day the newspaper boy asked the cook, “How long did Miss W— live after she was taken to the hospital?” and the woman, whose equanimity had been sorely disturbed by the excitement of the day, sharply dismissed him with an answer somewhat as follows:—“*She didn’t live at all: it wasn’t Miss W—!*”

Early the next morning a cab was sent for to take Miss W— to a railway station. On her appearing at the door, the cabman exclaimed, with hearty bluntness, “Well, I am glad to see you, ma’am; we all heard that you were killed yesterday!” It was clear that if she had absented herself from home for a few days, her identity with the real sufferer would have been established in the neighbourhood, with almost the certainty of moral demonstration, by witnesses who were in themselves trustworthy, and whose knowledge of her, for many years, would apparently have entitled them to full credence.

A MIDLAND TOUR.

XV.—BLACK COUNTRY SCENES: COAL MINES AND COAL MINERS.

Not very much more than a century ago the iron ore in the Staffordshire mining districts was carried by horses from the pits to be smelted with charcoal. We now smelt it with *coal* at the pits’ mouths. About three and a half tons of coal are required for the manufacture of every ton of Finished Iron. Our success in the manufacture and export of iron is not so much owing to our having the ore, as to our possessing, so happily laid down with it, the coal by which it is smelted and refined. The most valuable seams of coal in Europe are associated in South Staffordshire with an unequalled number and extent of ironstone measures; and as much as £20,000 an acre has been realised here from coal and ironstone. The coal sometimes crops to the surface; but many thousands of pounds are expended in sinking the shafts, fixing engines and pumps, and erecting the necessary buildings, ere that at any depth can be “won.”

Plot, in his “History of Staffordshire,” written nearly 200 years ago, tells us that in this district “there are usually twelve or fifteen collieries in work, and as many out of work. Some of these,” he says, “afford 2,000 tons of coal yearly; others 3,000, 4,000, or 5,000 tons.” In 1869 (the last year of which accounts are yet rendered) there were 482 mines in this neighbourhood. The quantity of coal now annually raised in South Staffordshire was lately estimated at 10,306,000; and that used in the production of pig and finished iron at 4,521,875 tons. But a prodigious quantity has been lost for ever in the mines, besides that to which we have already referred as wasted above-ground. Mr. Hartley, of the Royal Commission on Coal, in his Report to the Duke of Argyll, alludes to the broken condition of these minings, arising from the careless system (or rather,

want of system) under which their early workings were conducted; observing that the old mode of working, consequent in a great measure upon the subdivision of the acreage into numerous small collieries, caused large portions of the coal to be left as protective barriers between conterminous ownerships. Professor Ansted, too, says that an *unusual* proportion of this field has been injured and wasted by careless working; Mr. Warington Smyth, Chief Inspector of Crown Mines, states that the mode employed in getting out the Thick Coal is attended with the waste of thousands of tons per acre; and Mr. Baker, Inspector of South Staffordshire Mines, adds that the entire quantity of coal left in the mines, and irrecoverably lost, amounts to from a quarter to a third of the whole. It was estimated in 1860, on the best evidence obtainable, that the duration of all parts of the South Staffordshire coal-field averaged only about forty years from that date; and it appears that a large portion of the earlier-worked part will now soon be exhausted.* But the additions made by fresh discoveries are frequent and considerable; and it has lately been proved that the basaltic hills of Rowley form only a comparatively thin capping over new and valuable measures.

In the Report of the Coal Commission, allusion is made to the great body of water by which a very considerable number of the mines in this district are inundated. It was stated some few years back that about fifty million gallons, or two hundred and twenty thousand tons of water (being nearly ten times the weight of the coal then raised), were pumped from the South Staffordshire coal mines daily; that some 5,000 horse-power was required to lift it, and that this horse-power represented plant employed to the value of half a million sterling, and an annual expenditure of £25,000, or about 3½ a ton on the coal "gotten" in the district. The figures (save the last) are probably now much higher. Almost every colliery has its own tale to tell of difficulties surmounted or found insurmountable, of labour fruitlessly wasted, or expense unnecessarily incurred therein. Sometimes engines of insufficient power, more frequently larger ones than necessary, have been erected. Some of the most serious difficulties have been met with in pumping from mines that had been worked, and allowed to be drowned; and sometimes operations have been stopped through the corrosion of pumps and rods by the water that had remained a long time in old workings. The principal difficulty has been the absence of united effort by the various proprietors. Mr. Hartley observes that, "until drained by some voluntary and unanimous system, or upon some compulsory principle, the present dormant portion of the field must continue unavailable."†

Many thousand miners are employed in getting the coal from the pits in this neighbourhood. And the life of the miner is a hard and gloomy one. Separated from the mass of his fellow-men, and consigned, as it were, to a sunless world and a heavy and

noxious atmosphere; forced to work in a half naked state, and in unnatural and painful positions,*—kneeling, squatting, stooping, lying upon his side or his back, often while steaming and perspiring at every pore, and every moment in peril—he leads, as it seems, a most joyless existence. Until very lately, while other men have averaged about sixty hours a week, the miner has had to work underground eleven or twelve hours a day; and in some instances men and boys in the mines have worked thirteen and even sixteen hours a day. And it is not merely bodily labour that is required of the miner, but skill, patience, presence of mind, coolness, thoughtfulness, and other invaluable qualities. And though it is an old and oft-told tale, yet we greatly need to be reminded, that no men are more exposed than our miners to terrible and fatal accidents. They are subject to accidents in the shafts as they go down or come up, through the breaking of ropes, the giving way of machinery; also falls of roof (the most numerous of all mining catastrophes), through the giving way of walls and props; to accidents in blasting, spontaneous combustion, explosions of fire-damp, suffocation by choke-damp, irruptions of quicksand and of water! They are at war with nature, and the very rain from heaven is sometimes a calamity to the miner, forcing its way into the pit, and forming broad and rapid streams, which suddenly inundate the mine, and sweep all before them. And then a company of, it may be twenty, or more, or perhaps a group of two or three here and there, or sometimes a solitary one, is shut up in a living tomb for days and days together with the bodies of dead comrades, perchance, all around, to suffer the pangs of hunger, and thirst, and slow dissolution, with inward disquiet not to be told, till delirium, and madness, and death follow! A huge volume might be filled with the most thrilling tales of those who have thus fallen victims to the necessities of civilisation, who have been crushed, drowned, mangled, scorched, buried alive, slain! No wonder that the pitmen believe that the mines are haunted by the spirits of the dead—the dead whose bodies have never been recovered!

The scene in the immediate neighbourhood of a coal mine when a fatal catastrophe occurs must be witnessed to be at all realised. Such scenes are but too frequent and familiar to the inhabitants of the Black Country. Husbands, fathers, and sons, have left their homes, and gone down into the pit. They have been absent some hours. Suddenly the ground is felt to tremble violently, and presently men are seen running towards the town or village, and giving the alarm. Soon a crowd gathers round the pit's mouth, and among them many women and children. It is found that seven, eight, or, perhaps, a dozen or more men are missing. Some of the pit-bank people, and colliers not at work, volunteer to go down; they attempt it, but are stopped half way by the choke-damp; after a while lights are lowered to try the air, and, as these do not go out, two, three, or four men descend, and presently, finding they can make a little way, signal for others; these follow, they explore the pit as far as they can, amid the wreck of the mine and the bodies of the dead and dying, but the choke-damp hangs about, they can go but a little way into the workings, and are soon obliged to beat

* Mr. Hartley estimates the quantity of coal remaining unworked in South Staffordshire, East Worcestershire, and Shropshire, not exceeding 500 yards in depth, at 2,268,668,310 tons; out of which he supposes there are unavailable through inferior quality, waste in working, faults, or other causes, 360,548,542 tons.

† In North Staffordshire numerous collieries are drowned out, and the whole coal-field is threatened with inundation. It is said, however, that the colliery owners are all but indifferent thereto, as they get great gain through the increased price of coal. We understand that a Bill is about to be brought before Parliament for the compulsory drainage of large portions of the deep mines of that district. On the other hand, the pumping of water from coal and ironstone mines into running streams will, it is understood, be prohibited by the new Public Health Bill; and it is said that this will paralyze the mining world.

* A prize of £500 has been offered by Mr. W. Frith, of Purley Wood, near Leeds (who is himself well known as an inventor), for the best coal-cutting machine.

a hasty retreat. Again and again the attempt is repeated, and again and again, as the air permits, relays assisting each other descend, but to no purpose. Then comes the long suspense—days and nights, perhaps, succeed each other—and day after day, night after night, the pit bank is crowded till the men are rescued, or all hope of rescue is gone. The accident at Brierley Hill, in March, 1869, and that at Black Lake Colliery, in November, 1871—the one from water and the other from fire, and both in this neighbourhood—have left terrible memories behind them.

Although a large proportion of the accidents in coal-pits are due to the recklessness of the pitmen, it is also true that the men are often forced to "get" coal out of very dangerous places, and are so driven by the overseeing butties and doggies that they have no time to take the necessary precautions. And we are told that in iron-mining a great increase of fatal accidents always follows a strike, the roadways and workings being out of repair, the owners and charter-masters anxious to send out as much ironstone as possible, and the miners desirous to earn as much as they can to make up for lost time. There is no doubt at all that lives are frequently lost for want of the commonest care. And men will hide pipes in their pockets that they may smoke, when they well know that "just a whiff" may be death to them and their companions. *A thousand miners are annually killed in Great Britain, and several thousand permanently injured.* (The number of miners in Great Britain in 1870 was 350,894.) But the present race of miners, having had little instruction, do not feel the advantage of, and in most cases will not endure, system and discipline; and the most surprising ignorance is sometimes found among even those who are placed in control. It may be added (and it is a lamentable fact) that in *management of mines* England is far behind some Continental countries; but it is pleasing to know that the great ignorance to which we have referred cannot last much longer; our new laws will remove it. When the miner is educated he will set more value on his life, and the lives of those around him, and his quickened faculties and his personal experience will lead him to invent new safeguards. (We may mention that a prize of £150, and another of £50, have recently been offered by Mr. Edward Hermon, M.P., for the best essays, by working colliers, on the best means of ensuring safety in the working of mines.) Most happily we have lately seen the introduction of ventilation by the Steam Jet (whereby the recovery of the bodies at Black Lake Colliery was speedily effected when all other means of access to the workings had failed, and which must prove most valuable in the Thick Coal mines of South Staffordshire); and the invention of the Gas Alarm Lamp, which detects the deadly gas in the pit, and gives notice when it is accumulating.

The wages of miners are paid either by time or "stint," and while both time and "stint" have of late been shortened, the rate of pay has been increased. It has been customary for the wages of the miners to follow the prices of finished iron, and as these have advanced they have expected advances. But lately, as the regulated hours have diminished and their pay has improved, *the miners have worked less and less.* At last in March '72 they succeeded in obtaining the Nine Hours' System, or a limit of 54 hours a week for time wages. No sooner had they gained this than they behaved like children suddenly

released from parental restraint. Many would not work more than three or four days of the six, and it was recently said that the average number of hours in this district did not exceed thirty-six weekly. Hence the "output" was reduced many thousands of tons a week, and an artificial scarcity of coal was created that almost paralyzed some of our iron works, and raised the price of coal in the market, which increased pay for diminished labour had already sent up, leaving the colliers no better off than before. Large quantities of coal were brought from Lancashire and Yorkshire, and still the supply was insufficient. People were reminded of the great strikes of 1858 and 1864, when the colliers of this neighbourhood turned out by thousands,—in September '64 there were 30,000 on strike—when the masters made arrangements for getting supplies of coal from Lancashire, Derbyshire, and North and South Wales, and when as much as 10,000 tons were brought in by rail daily. In both the iron works and collieries of South Staffordshire the Truck System is found more or less in operation. The colliers are paid fortnightly by the "butties," who employ them (and who, with their "doggies," are hard taskmasters), and, like the ironworkers, draw on account weekly, and are expected to spend a part of their wages at the "tommy shops," with which, too often, beer-shops are associated.

McCulloch* observes that "taking the annual produce of pig-iron in the United Kingdom at 5,000,000 tons, and supposing that about three tons of coal are required for the production of each ton of iron, the consumption in each branch of the iron trade will amount to 15,000,000 tons a year; add to this quantity 6,000,000 for the conversion of pig into bar iron, and it follows that a supply of no fewer than 21,000,000 tons of coal will be annually required in this single department of industry. We have already shown how the iron manufacture is increasing. The demand for coal in other branches increases also; it is expected that 115,000,000 tons will be required this year. And when we consider how dependent on our supplies of mineral fuel are all our manufactures in which steam-power is employed, our commerce, our public convenience, our domestic comfort, and though last not least, our naval superiority and imperial sway, we feel the vast importance of the subject. Our coal is our pioneer and commissioner in all parts of the world. "It is by means of their coal depôts," says Simonin, "that the modern representatives of the old Phœnicians mark their maritime halting-places on the globe, and it is partly for the supply of their steamers that they thus transport coal from one hemisphere to the other. In the Mediterranean they are everywhere, especially at Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria; in the Red Sea, at Suez; in the Indian Ocean, at Aden, the Mauritius, Natal, Mozambique, and Zanzibar; then at Muscat, Bombay, Madras, Ceylon, Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, and the stations in the China and Japanese waters; in the Atlantic at Buenos-Ayres, Monte-Video, Rio Janeiro, Bahia, Pernambuco; and at the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, Ascension, St. Helena, the Cape of Good Hope, on the coasts of Guinea and Congo. All these stations, all these anchorages, have stores of English coal; so has the entire archipelago of the Antilles, especially Cuba, Jamaica, Saint Thomas, and Colon-Aspinwall. Along the coasts of

* Commercial Dictionary, 1871.

North America—at Quebec, Halifax, Boston, and New York—the British Colonies and the energetic Yankees compete with each other in supplying coal. In the Pacific it is Panama, Guayaquil, Callao, Arica, and Valparaiso, which the coal ships visit; and on the opposite parallel in the northern hemisphere, San Francisco, the Queen of the Great Ocean; finally, between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific it is the great island Australia, which of itself forms a section of the globe. *The globe now belongs to those who can supply her with coal*; and, as a celebrated statesman said in the House of Commons, ‘all the nations which are without combustible minerals are the vassals of England.’”

The importance of a good understanding between us and our miners can hardly therefore be exaggerated. The subject is big with interest, and demands our most serious consideration. We may hope that the march of education and intelligence will prevent the occurrence of strikes; that the concessions which have been made to the miners will suffice; that habits of sobriety and economy will become more general among them; and that with that relief from excessive labour which they now enjoy, and which the introduction of coal-cutting machinery will enhance, and with the additional means of improvement and comfort they now possess, all may go well. But still we must be prepared for possibilities—for old King Coal is *lord of the world*.

Varieties.

SOVEREIGNS BELOW WEIGHT.—A London banker discusses the grievance of light sovereigns, and suggests remedies, in a letter to the “Times”:—“The law having decreed that a sovereign shall be accepted as of the value of a pound until it is worn down to the value of 19s. 10½d., the loss of 1½d. should be borne by the national Exchequer, as representing the public, who have, in fact, created the loss. Any further loss should be borne by the last holder who has taken the coin in payment in his own wrong.

“A sovereign when issued weighs 123·274 grains, and is legal tender until it is worn down to 122·5 grains. It therefore loses by wear during its legal currency 774 grains. Now, notwithstanding that the law has enacted that a sovereign may be legally worn down to the extent of 774 grains, yet, if a coin be presented deficient in weight, even the hundredth part of a grain below the limit, the holder must pay not only for the loss in weight beyond the legal limit, but must actually also pay the State for the 774 grains which the law has decreed that a sovereign may legally lose by wear. Surely that is not only an anomalous, but an unjust state of affairs.

“The remedies I would suggest are—1st (as above), that the State should bear the loss caused by the legal wear; and, 2nd, that the limit of least current weight should be reduced to, say 122·2 grains. The advantages which would result if the latter proposition were adopted appear to be obvious, not the least of which would be the great saving in Mint expenses, as with the present small margin for wear and tear a sovereign becomes below the current weight in a comparatively short period, thereby entailing the necessity of a constant recurrence of the same gold. With reference to the gold coinage recently introduced in the German Empire, the Imperial Government, recognising not only the injustice, but the impolicy, of causing the person who happened to be the last holder of a gold coin deficient in weight to bear the loss which had resulted from the coin having been worn down in the service of the population of the empire in general, decreed that bankers and others receiving the light coin should not reissue the same, but should receive the full nominal value from the State.

“Considering, then, that, owing to the inefficacious measures hitherto adopted for maintaining the coinage in an efficient state, already 40 per cent. or 50 per cent. is below the present

legal limit, it is most urgently to be desired that the legislative authorities will speedily take action in the matter, and while relieving the public, and more especially the banking community, from the necessity of continually acting in contravention of the law, will place the metallic currency of this country upon a sounder basis.”

Another correspondent, in criticising the banker’s proposal, makes additional suggestions which seem to exhaust the subject in its practical bearings:—

“The injustice of our present system, under which the last holder of a sovereign is fined for the wear and tear which it has undergone in other men’s pockets as well as in his own, is sufficiently obvious, and few will dispute the claim of your correspondent ‘A Banker’ that the nation should sustain the loss. His proposal, however, that the Government should pay for all light gold appears to me inadmissible, as gold would at once be mercilessly sweated, and the public, aware that it could always get a new coin for an old one, would cease to attempt to protect itself, but would take anything that bore any vestige of image or superscription, so that we should be worse off than ever.

“My idea has always been that the nation should pay for fair wear and tear, and this appears to be in part conceded by the issue of a sovereign at a surplus weight of 774, to allow both for the inevitable variation in weight between particular coins and for wear and tear. To effect my object I would give the sovereign a term of life of a certain number of years, in which experience would show that fair use will on an average rub 774 off it. At the end of such period I would make so much allowance to the holder for short weight as should appear to be just, or even a very slight profit in his favour, to encourage the withdrawal of old coins, and this allowance would increase with the age of the coin. For example, taking arbitrary figures, let the sovereign circulate ten years; at the end of that time let every holder be allowed 2d., at the end of fifteen years 3d., and so on; thus the nation would pay so much a year for the expensive luxury of a gold coinage, from which Mr. Lowe would fain wean it altogether, while sweating would not be more practicable than at present, except that any one who got a large bag of unused sovereigns ten years old would be able to sweat them down 2d. each (an evil to which I would submit), but no one would hoard sovereigns for ten years to gain 2d.

“To make the plan theoretically more complete, the sovereign should be issued with no margin for wear and tear, but this would involve an alteration of the present standard of weight, and all the important questions which depend thereon, and would revolutionise the system of management at the Mint; but I feel convinced that in some such arrangement as that which I have sketched a remedy for the present wrong may be found.”

LITERARY FUND.—Mr. Disraeli some years ago presided at the annual dinner of the Royal Literary Fund, a position which has been honourably given this year to the King of the Belgians. On that occasion Mr. Disraeli raised a question which elicited from the “Times” the following sensible criticism and protest:—“The author is, he tells us, ‘of peculiar organisation, and the life and career of such men cannot be regulated by the common rules of prudence which wisely and properly are expected to regulate the conduct of ordinary men.’ It is not long since one of the greatest literary men of our generation protested with a generous indignation against this demoralising doctrine. Mr. Thackeray did as much honour to his profession as to himself by accepting for literary men all the obligations of any ordinary life. He taught by example as well as by precept that a man could be a genius without being a spendthrift, and could indulge his imagination without forgetting the existence of reality. The truth is, the fancy which Mr. Disraeli, perhaps carelessly, endorsed has done infinite harm to literature itself. Healthy work can only be done by healthy bodies and healthy minds, and the man who sits loose to the rules of ‘prudence, wisdom, and propriety’ has lost one of the constituents of high art. In mind as well as in body his hand will shake and his vision will be confused. Nor is there any justification in fact for this unhappy tradition. Many, if not most, of the greatest geniuses in literature and art have been men of singular prudence and industry. We had hoped that Mr. Thackeray had banished this false sentiment; but as often as it may be repeated it will be necessary to say that literary men, like the members of all other professions, forfeit their best claim to sympathy by setting themselves above or below the standard of ‘ordinary men.’ To base the foundations of a Benevolent Society on the inherent imprudence of its objects is to degrade the body of men for whose relief it is designed. In truth, as literature becomes more and more a regular profession, it will be more and more

understood that it can be, and must be, regulated on just the same business principles as all other professions. If literature has become one of the honourable professions, let it accept the obligations which other honourable professions fulfil."

BEE-KEEPING IN AMERICA.—Three journals, devoted to bee-culture, are most creditably supported in this country, and their columns are filled with practical essays which reveal a true science as their basis. Indeed I very much question if among any of the industrial pursuits of the nation so much effort is made toward a mutual improvement as among the brotherhood of bee-keepers; so much real effort made to disseminate knowledge, and develop the resources of the country. Witness an association of bee-keepers in almost every State, composed of men who can teach lessons in natural history, such as would awaken enthusiasm, and arouse the marvellous whenever unfolded. Witness the great national association which in its session at Cincinnati, last February, was represented by delegates from fourteen of our States and two of our Territories. —*From Bee-keepers' Journal.*

WASTE OF LIFE.—People talk very loudly about the waste of lives in war; I wonder to how many people it has occurred, what is the waste of lives in peace? I doubt if the most sanguinary battle that was ever fought in ancient or modern history has carried off nearly as many human beings as die in England in every one year from purely preventable causes. Now, that is the state of things around us: of course we cannot change it in a day, but we can modify it. This institution, of course, can do but little; it is only one among many, but it is one of a thousand agencies which earnest and philanthropic men are bringing to bear for the purpose of remedying this great evil. —*Earl of Derby, at the Children's Hospital Meeting.*

NEEDLEWORK TAPESTRY.—The account of the relic of Queen Mary, in the "Leisure Hour" for January, has brought to light a similar antique treasure, a piece of tapestry with scenes from the life of King David. It is of needlework, and said by tradition to have been brought to Scotland by Queen Mary. The present proprietor, Mr. Daniel, Castle Street, Aberdeen, obtained it through a relative, to whom it was given by the late Earl of Kintore, in recognition of above forty years' service in the family at Keith Hall.

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA.—Governor Seward, speaking of the great wall of China, which he examined during his late trip to the East, says:—"The Chinese have been for at least two or three thousand years a wall-making people. It would bankrupt New York or Paris to build the walls of the city of Peking. The great wall of China is the great wall of the world. It is forty feet high. The lower thirty feet is of hewn limestone or granite. Two modern carriages may pass each other on the summit. It has a parapet throughout its whole length, with convenient staircases, buttresses, and garrison houses at every quarter of a mile, and it runs, not by cutting down hills and raising valleys, but over the uneven crests of the mountains and down through their gorges, a distance of a thousand miles. Admiral Rogers and I calculated that it would cost more now to build the great wall of China, through its extent of one thousand miles, than it has cost to build the fifty-five thousand miles of railroad in the United States. What a commentary it is upon the ephemeral range of the human intellect to see this great utilitarian enterprise, so necessary and effective two thousand years ago, now not merely useless, but an incumbrance and an obstruction!"

FAVERSHAM ABBEY.—An archaeologist, who has spent much time and labour on a work describing Faversham Abbey, sends the following notes of criticism on the paper by an antiquary in the "Leisure Hour" for March. "The article on The Bones of King Stephen contains several statements about Faversham to which I take exception:—1. 'Her palace (Matilda's) is now turned into a greengrocer's shop; the street is still called Court Street.' As a matter of fact there is no evidence that Matilda had a palace at Faversham at all; on the contrary, it is known she lived at St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, while her abbey was in course of erection, from whence she visited it frequently. Again: Court Street derives its name not from a Royal Court being held there, but from the fact that the Hall of Pleas or Court Hall of the abbot was held over the Court Gate of the abbey at the end of the street. 2. The abbey (church) is said to have been 240 feet long and 120 feet wide. That is to say, larger than some of our cathedrals, yet it was only for the use of the monks and not for a congregation, for the parishioners had a large church of their own. In the Sextry Orchard, where the abbey church stood, is a hollow near the boundary wall with a deposit of chalk, flint, fragments of paving-tiles, ragstone, etc., some feet wide, the dimensions being 100 feet east and west, and 50

feet north and south; this is supposed by local antiquaries to be the site of the church. 3. King Stephen is said to have been buried in a chantry chapel. No old authors state so. Again: it is not clear if he was buried in this chantry, or the church, or whether the little square chapel is distinct from the abbey said to be 240 feet by 120 feet. 4. The King's monument is said to have been removed from the abbey to the parish church. As a matter of fact, the tomb shown as King Stephen's in the north aisle of Faversham Church is of decorated date, certainly not older than the early part of Edward II's reign. 5. It is said the abbey church had beneath it a subterranean passage. As no information remains respecting the details of the church, no one can know this. A subterranean passage certainly encircled the precincts of the abbey; in fact, a portion remains now close to the creek: the purpose of it was to carry away the drainage of the monastery, and to carry the mill-stream through. This passage is of stone, five feet in height. 6. Arden is said to have been thrown over the abbey wall into the meadow of the abbey farm. The Faversham Wardmote Book states the body was taken through the gateway, which still remains, and thrown into the Ambry Croft, now called the Shooting Meadow.—G. BEDD."

LICENSING STREET HAWKERS AND SWEEPERS.—A paper was lately read before "The Society for organising Relief and repressing Mendicity" by Mr. John MacGregor (Rob Roy). Useful hints were given as to the best modes of utilising and regulating the activity and energy of the street arabs, and other nomadic tribes of poor folk in the metropolis, especially the young. The difficulties caused by indiscriminate almsgiving were strongly stated. At the conclusion of the discussion which followed the paper, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—"That it is highly desirable that persons engaged in selling or working in the streets should be under special control as to their orderly conduct, and the numbers allowed at each place. That for this purpose the system of licences under 'The Metropolitan Streets Act,' already applied to certain classes of street workers, should be extended to all persons selling goods in the streets, with the exception of *bona fide* dealers in food or other necessities, not being children within the provisions of the Education Act: and that vestries and local boards should be stimulated to use effectually their powers, under 'The Metropolitan Local Management Act,' to appoint and regulate street sweepers." This resolution would meet the case of street sweepers, match-sellers, news-vendors, luggage carriers, and other classes of street folk to the number of 10,000 or more.

WHITEBAIT.—I have always maintained Yarrel was quite correct in making the whitebait (properly so called) a distinct species (*Clupea alba*). There are, however, other ichthyologists who deny this, and say that the tiny fish termed whitebait, so much relished whilst in season, are simply and only the young or fry of the herring. When the whitebait fishing commenced this season, through the kindness of Mr. Grove, of Charing Cross, I received a basket containing a fair sample of the first take of fish. Before I made any examination of these fish I wrote to Mr. Henry Lee, whom I knew would be an able assistant and adviser, asking him to come to the office of "Land and Water" at his earliest convenience, so that I might have his aid and valuable opinion. I state this because it will show that I wished the examination to be perfectly fair, and that no prejudice in favour of a pet theory should in any way bias my opinions. Mr. Lee came immediately after the receipt of my note, and I will now state the result of our investigation. The basket contained about fifty fish; the sizes I will state directly. We determined first of all that none of them were sprats—(I may, however, mention that I have seen quantities of young sprats offered for sale during the last week, which were called "whitebait")—none of them shad, and that they were not pilchards; and that whatever species they might be, they every one belonged to that particular species. Now for the sizes. We arranged a series, and I give the measurements of seven, measured from the eye to the end of the body: 6in., 4in., 2½in., 1½in., 1in., ¾in., ½in. This gives a fair average of the contents of the basket. We opened several of the larger fish, but did not discover any mill or roe. The knotty point to be decided is, are these fish the whitebait of Yarrell (*C. alba*) or herrings (*C. harengus*)? Apart from all the arguments which have from time to time been brought forward to show that the herring and whitebait are one and the same fish, I ask those who hold that opinion to account for the appearance of herrings in the Thames as far up as Greenhithe on the 23rd of February, which vary in size, from the baby fish just out of the egg, half an inch in length, up to one of six inches; and be it remembered, as the measurements prove, the increase of size from the smaller to the larger is by regular gradations.—JOHN KEAST LORD.